

For more than half a century, the United States and Israel have shared the common bond of democracy. This bond remains as strong today as it was when President Harry Truman first recognized the creation of a Jewish State in 1948.

Over the past few years, we have watched violence in Israel and the Palestinian territories spiral out of control. Clearly, the current situation in the Middle East has gotten out of hand, and the time for the United States to become more actively engaged in the region is now.

Today Israel faces growing threats in the region - from Iran and Iraq to the resurgence of al-Qaida and the reinvigoration of Hamas and Hezbollah. These threats have dangerous consequences for the stability of the region and the security of the entire world.

One of the biggest threats facing Israel today is Iran. Simply put, the authoritarian regime in Iran threatens not only Israel, but the entire world. The anti-Semitic, anti-Israel and anti-U.S. public acts and statements of Iranian leaders should be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Throughout my tenure as a Member of Congress, and for years before, I have traveled throughout the Middle East. I have met with countless Middle Eastern leaders, urging them to seek out peaceful solutions to historically violent conflicts. As Co-Chair of the Congressional Democratic Israel Working Group, I work hard to educate Members of Congress about the importance of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

I will continue to do everything that I can to ensure that the relationship that the United States enjoys with Israel, its strongest ally in the Middle East, will continue for years to come.

With the Bush administration out and the Obama administration in, I have only high hopes for peace-making in the region. We must lift up the United States' credibility in the region and I believe we have an opportunity now to take a more active role in helping Israel attain peace.

As Israel continues on its journey toward peace, it is essential that United States remain supportive of Israel's right to defend itself and protect its citizens. Equally, we must also remain the guiding light toward peace even when the prospect of a peaceful solution seems impossible. I am hopeful and optimistic that one day Israel and all of its neighbors will live in peace.